

BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES

BOEM OCS Region: [Gulf of Mexico](#)

Title: Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Literature Search and Data Synthesis Including Strandings and Nesting Sites (GM-09-x20)

Planning Area: Atlantic

Total Cost: \$141,231

Period of Performance: FY 2009-2012

Conducting Organization: National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Science Center, Woods Hole, MA

BOEM Contact: [Dr. Deborah Epperson](#)

Description:

Background: The U.S. Atlantic seaboard has not been developed for alternative energy but interest is increasing and several alternative energy projects have been proposed. The U.S. Atlantic harbors a suite of protected coastal and offshore marine organisms including sea turtles, birds, bats, fishes, and marine mammals, many of which are listed as endangered or threatened.

The U.S. Atlantic coast has experienced limited offshore energy development. However, a sizeable body of research on marine mammals and sea turtles has been conducted in these waters. Nesting and stranding events have been systematically recorded in several areas along the Atlantic coast. This research data review and synthesis will provide a foundation for environmental assessment and determination of potential impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles from energy development and production activities.

Objectives: The objectives of the study are:

- Review of pertinent research and literature, including previous BOEM studies, and
- Publication of a report on the findings of recent research and, by synthesis of available information, a characterization of marine mammal and sea turtle diversity, distribution, abundance, and seasonality along the U.S. Atlantic Seaboard from Maine to Florida.

Methods: This project will involve a comprehensive literature search and integration of findings with existing environmental information for the region.

Products: Final Report

Importance to BOEM: The BOEM will need updated and synthesized Atlantic OCS information on marine mammals and sea turtles of the region in order to meet its responsibility of ensuring that all OCS activities, specifically alternative energy, are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner. The proposed study will provide up-to-date information on species composition, distribution, abundance, and seasonal variation of marine mammals and sea turtles along the Atlantic coast. Nesting sites of sea turtles and strandings of all species should be included. Data generated will be used for environmental review of projects proposed in Atlantic waters.

Current Status: Final report in preparation

Final Report Due: June 2012

Publications: None

Affiliated WWW Sites: None

Revised date: March 2012

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